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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3604
INFO RUEHBE/AMEMBASSY BELMOPAN
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 5501
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 3595
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 8442
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 3454
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 4612
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 2728
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0341

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 001800

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR RCBUDDEN, S/CT FJVOGEL, CA ARFRELICK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2016
TAGS: [KVPR](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CVIS](#) [ASEC](#) [KHLS](#) [BF](#)
SUBJECT: BAHAMAS: GLOBAL PURSUIT OF TERRORIST INFORMATION
EXCHANGE

REF: A. STATE 190832
[1](#)B. NASSAU 1117

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Brent Hardt for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Bahamas cooperates closely with the U.S. on counter-terrorism, but lacks the funding or infrastructure to effectively track and monitor terrorist suspects through its 700 islands and cays. The Bahamas maintains an immigration database at major air POES, but does not maintain a database for its many smaller airports or for sea arrivals. It does not maintain a domestic watchlist or use biometric systems. Information sharing regarding immigration and terrorism even within the small Bahamian government is haphazard. Subject to these limitations and based upon past cooperation with the U.S. on law enforcement and military matters, The Bahamas is a potential partner for exchange of information provided its receives U.S. support for training and infrastructure.
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) Below are detailed responses keyed to questions in reftel [1](#)A. Please also see Post's assessment of Bahamian immigration systems in reftel B.

[1](#)A. Immigration Databases:

1) (SBU) Computerized Databases: The Bahamas Immigration Service has its own online database. Visitor data is entered upon arrival in the Department of Immigration's system via passport swipe and subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Tourism, which is responsible for tracking visitor departures. A complete tracking of visitor entry/departure information requires a hand search of card files held by the Tourism Ministry as well as Immigration. The Immigration database is available at most international airport POES located on the larger islands in The Bahamas, but not at seaport POES.

2) Problems With Systems:

- (C) The Police, Immigration and Tourism personnel have limited formal exchange of information; personal relationships form the basis of limited informal exchanges. There is no electronic interconnectivity. For example, if the Special Branch of the Police Force, which tracks terrorism, wishes to track an individual, officers must physically search the card files of Immigration and Tourism Ministries.

- (C) Immigration Service and political officials have been previously involved in migrant smuggling into the U.S.

- (C) Immigration personnel receive limited training and currently lack the capacity to manage a more complex system without additional training. A limited and static Immigration Department budget is a continuing constraint on operations and improvement.

- (C) With only limited screening of visitors at the smaller Bahamian ports and total lack of electronic connectivity, controls are not effective. Once a sea-borne visitor has checked into a Bahamian port on most islands, departure and reentry are not monitored.

3) (C) Database Updating: The Immigration Service database is updated with each new card entry on a daily basis. The Tourism Ministry card file is 2-3 months behind on filing.

B. Watchlist and Information Sharing:

- (C) There is no domestic watchlist.

- (C) The Police serve as the central custodian of domestic criminal/terrorist information. They operate, however, with limited information exchange from other agencies. For example, the Foreign Ministry, to whom the U.S. supplies deportee lists, does not share this information with the Police. (U.S. officials provide the information directly.)

- (C) The Interpol watchlist is used by the Central Detective Unit of the Bahamas Police Force. Domestic airlines use the TSA no-fly and other lists via the CBP/DHS preclearance operations at Nassau and Freeport. If a "hit" is received, the airline waits for DHS approval before clearing. Bahamian officials also contact Post when a "hit"

occurs.

- (C) We are unaware of any bilateral/multilateral watchlist agreements with The Bahamas.

C. Biometrics

1) (SBU) There are no biometric systems in place at POES or known plans to install a biometric system other than development of an e-passport.

2) (SBU) Currently, the Bahamas does not use a machine-readable passport, but one is currently in advanced stages of development.

D. Identifying Appropriate Partners

- (C) The Bahamas location just off U.S. shores and its strong security and law enforcement cooperation with the U.S. make The Bahamas a potentially attractive partner for information exchange. However, its immigration controls are lacking in needed sophistication and internal coordination. The Bahamas would certainly welcome terrorist information from the U.S., and could in return provide limited electronic data from its immigration database. Full realization of benefits from a Bahamian information partnership would be dependent upon investment in Bahamian systems and training.

HARDT